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## Editorial

Welcome to ISC4 and sorry about the delay since the last issue, but a lot has happened since Spring 1996. For example, this journal now has an ISSN and ISC has become an organisation in liaison with the Library Association. This will allow ISC to : book accommodation at LAHQ at a reduced rate ; place news, calendar items and adverts in the LAR ; buy LAP publications at a discount ; receive copies of LA Council papers ; apply for grants of up to £500. ISC has already submitted a funding application to : help pay for this journal ; issue a new "Radical Booksellers Directory" and other publications ; pay for publicity, travel and other expenses ; and subsidise future ISC conferences and events.

ISC may be small in number but we are big in influence. We have received favourable reviews in other journals. We are also maintaining a high profile within the LA. Anyone who read their July LA Record would have seen seven contributions from four members of the ISC editorial board. And this was not a one off - it was followed up in the August Record by five references to ISC (see pages 378, 384, 393, 400 and 401).

Another indication of ISC's influence is the fact that articles from our journal are being reproduced elsewhere. For example, "Alternative Library Literature, 1994/1995" (edited by Sanford Berman and James Danky) contains an article by Shiraz Durrani (The mirage of democracy in Kenya) which first appeared in ISC1. In addition, Chris Atton is co-ordinating UK material on behalf of "Counterpoise", a US review journal covering alternative literature, written by and for librarians. Chris Atton has also attracted some very positive reviews for his "Alternative Literature : a practical guide for librarians" (Gower Publishing Limited).

In terms of networking, ISC has been contacted by Richard Alexander who was previously active in Librarians for Social Change. He still has some copies of their journal for sale. We also received information from the Independent News Collective (INK) and there will be more about this group in ISC 5.

ISC is in the process of producing an information / membership leaflet. This will be sent out with all ISC publicity and to support our activities and campaigns. ISC has become involved in three campaigns recently. One of these is to defend two small bookshops who are threatened with a libel action for stocking "Searchlight". Whatever your views are on "Searchlight" we hope you agree that bookshops, libraries and other distributors should have the right to stock this, and other titles. If you would like to support this campaign please contact Housmans Bookshop, 5 Caledonian Road, Kings Cross, London, N1 5DX.



The second campaign ISC is supporting is to get the LA to establish a Black Library Workers Group with its own funding, conference, newsletter, seats on Council etc. At least one member of the ISC editorial board found this idea to be "very odd". Christopher Merrett, "looking at things from the perspective of a South African" commented that "we've spent the last 50 years trying to abolish this sort of thing, but I suppose each society needs its own approach"

The ISC view is that we live in a racist society and so organisations like the Black Socialist Society (Labour Party) and Black Sections in trade unions still need to exist. If you support this campaign and are an LA member please write to the Chief Executive requesting that a Black Workers Group be set up. Under the LA's constitution, Council must consider such a request if it is made by 1% of the membership (IE 250 members).

The third ISC campaign is in support of the Muckdonald Two. The continuing McDonalds libel trial is all about the freedom to publish and distribute information about the activities of an unpleasant multinational. ISC extend our best wishes and solidarity to Dave Morris and Helen Steel who, after two years on trial, are still doing battle with the \$26 billion company. For those who wish to support the two defendants contact the McLibel Support Campaign, c/o 5 Caledonian Road, London, N1. For those who wish to find out more about the case, information on the trial can also be obtained on the World Wide Net site [http : / www . mcspotlight . org /](http://www.mcspotlight.org/)

Finally, a brief word about the contents of this issue. There are articles on libraries in China and Vietnam by Kathleen Ladizesky and Len Aldis. These papers were presented at the ISC / Link conference "Better Read Than Dead". There is a short history of the Commonweal Collection by Sylvia Barlow and a piece by Sara Lobman on the culture war against the use of public libraries in America. Our regular features include book reviews (a riot to read), other organisations (fellow travellers) and Christopher Merrett's letter from SA (Back to the past in South Africa ?).

#### Editor's note

This issue if ISC was edited by John Pateman. The cover and back page were designed by Fernando Pacheco Bellas, incorporating "Tree of Knowledge" by Mr Fish. Other illustrations are by Martyn Lowe.

We welcome contributions in our field. Whilst encouraging rigorous debate, the journal exists primarily for workers and practitioners, and so simple and clear English is preferable. Articles, where possible, should be between 500 and 2500 words. This is to ensure a wide coverage of topics in each issue. We also welcome reviews, letters and news items. Contributions should be sent to Chris Atton, Dunning Library, Napier University, 10 Colinton Road, Edinburgh, EH10 5DT.



# Library Services in China since 1949

## Early Developments after the 1949 Revolution

In 1949 the People's Republic of China was established under the leadership of Mao Tse Tung. Of primary importance at that time was the institution of a new social order and building the economy. There was already a library infrastructure but this had to be re-moulded to serve the new system. This meant a shift of service from the elites of the old regime to the masses - the workers, peasants and soldiers. At the same time library materials had to be re-balanced to promote the revolutionary movement and remove stock which was ideologically unacceptable.

Easier access to libraries was introduced with elimination of fines and charges. A new classification scheme based on Marxism-Leninism was developed to replace such schemes as Dewey and reflect the Communist concept of organisation of knowledge. Library staff were educated to understand the changes which were taking place in the country and were backed by supplementary staff who were Party cadres. So it can be seen that in providing library services for the people, a large emphasis lay in using the library to promote the new system.

Throughout the 1950's and 1960's public, university and scientific libraries were developed to supply the academic needs of scholars. At the same time in the peoples' communes libraries were developed for the proletariat, organised and operated at grass roots level with little or no funding from the State. The commune libraries were also usefully incorporated into the teaching of library skills to users and to bring a new consciousness to the peasants - in 1958 forty million people were reported to have been taught in this programme. These libraries of the people were especially important to Mao in promoting the Cultural Revolution.

Politics and information were intertwined when library services were provided to the herdsmen of the grasslands of Inner Mongolia. The Party branch trained its own librarians, heads of mobile libraries and story tellers to provide library facilities to the tribes people of the region. The need for a political awareness of people in this border region with the USSR was especially important.

In both the Great Leap Forward (1958-1960) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) Mao attempted to move the centre of gravity of decision making authority away from the bureaucrats down towards the masses. Peasant-worker initiatives were encouraged. The National Library had special political responsibility as well as traditional functions and could hold lectures in stadiums for up to 18,000 workers. This gives some indication of the scale of the political education and reorganisation in which it was involved.

Of course the development of librarianship in China is a vast subject and a comprehensive study has been made by John Barclay in his recently published book "The Seventy- year Ebb and Flow of Chinese Library Services" (1).



### Present Day Training Aimed to Meet Modern Demands

Training of librarians had always been influenced by the prevailing political needs. In recent times the economic growth of China has escalated and has been strongly linked with the necessity for a good information framework. The importance of library training has been outlined in a paper by Wang Jianqun (2) of the Documentation and Information Centre of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing.

An abstract to her paper says "We are entering the Information Era, for which trained information professionals are essential. How to train modern information professionals to meet the demands of an information society is a new challenge facing universities and colleges throughout the world, with China no exception. This paper gives a brief overview of training of information science professionals in China today and outlines some curriculum innovations and current problems."

She goes on to talk about LIS at Wuhan University which was the birthplace of formal library science education in China. There are 85 faculty members of which 36 are full professors and 38 lecturers teaching 20 PhD students, 75 MSc students, 567 undergraduates and 282 correspondence students.

At Peking University the LIS department was established in 1947 as part of the Literature Institute of the University. In 1949 it became an independent department. At this time there are 57 staff, 13 of them professors, 10 associate professors and 17 lecturers. 226 students are studying for BSc degree, 56 for MSc and 7 PhD students. There are over 1,100 correspondence students who usually work in libraries.

With the rapid development taking place in China, information is becoming an important and valuable resource. Training in LIS can either be done through a formal university course or taking part in research projects with the staff or schools or departments to gain practical experience. Wang Jianqun participated in the Shaanxi Colour TV Plant Management Information System Project.

Students of LIS usually have a good knowledge of English as it is regarded as a basic requirement of an Information Professional. At the present time IT has extensive applications in every field of the information industry in China and many new courses have been added to the curriculum recently.

A report by Zhu Nong (3), who graduated from Nanjing University in 1991 and is currently working in HK, is slightly critical of the LIS scene. He says, "the course at Nanjing is similar to those of USA". Tutors who teach Western librarianship are mainly recruited from the US. Some are actually Chinese graduates who were permitted to study overseas by the Chinese government.



On the whole the study of librarianship is not very popular in China. Less than 20 universities offer BSc degree courses in librarianship and about 5 offer MSc courses. On average there are 20 graduates from each institution per year. Graduates are allocated by the government to positions in public libraries or Science and Technology units of government departments. It is very difficult to transfer to another post. It is also very unlikely that people from outside the country can apply for library posts in China or for any staff exchange programmes to be established between China and other countries.

Generally speaking the status of a librarian is less than a factory manager. The monthly salary is about Renminbi \$200, while living costs come to some \$100. He went on to say that there is little in the way of refresher courses and staff learning process is simply mentoring. However, the system developed and implemented in, for example, Nanjing University usually becomes the model system for local public libraries with staff from the public libraries being informally trained at the academic institution. These two reports provide up to date information of the present day situation.

#### The New Openness in China

The development of liaison between HKLA and libraries in the PRC began with the 1st HK/Guangdong Joint Conference (4) at Zhongshan University in 1988. This was organised by Dr David Yen, Librarian of the Chinese University of HK and Professor Li Xie Jun of Guanzhou Teachers College. It was quickly followed by the 2nd HK/Guangdong Conference (5) held in HK the same year.

From contacts made at these meetings and also the wish of several expatriate librarians in HK, myself amongst them, it was not difficult to make more extensive visits. As if following the ripples of a stone thrown into the water, the visits began in Shenzhen, the region of South China near to HK and extended further and further afield to Guangzhou, Shanghai, Nanjing, and finally to Beijing and Tianjing.

Some measure of the interest in the visits can be gained from the fact that members of HKLA had to finance themselves for these visits and also to use their own time. Participants were both expatriate and local Hong Kong librarians, but it must be said that the driving force behind the organisation started amongst the expatriate British, Australian, New Zealand and American librarians.

Several local Hong Kong people made their first visit to the mainland as part of these library visits. The June 1990 problems meant that some local civil servants could not visit China at that time. There is not time to look at the libraries visited in detail, but some information can be gleaned from previously published articles (6), (7), (8), (9)..



HKLA was also invited to participate in two workshops in Beijing. These were the 1st (10) and 2nd (11) ISTIC Workshops held in 1991 and 1992. I attended both workshops together with Colin Storey HKLA President at the first one. At these workshops librarians from the region were given quite an extensive background into the work of ISTIC. They also gave papers about the state of librarianship in their own countries. The paper from Mr Li Rong Yip (12) (see ISC 3) was first given in Beijing at the 1st Workshop. From these workshops librarians from the Asia Pacific region learnt about modern developments at ISTIC.

Dr Douglas Foskett was present at the time of both workshops giving lectures to students. At one he presented his philosophical treatise on knowledge, information and libraries. Professors John Feather and Anthony Evans from Loughborough University were also at the second workshop, while investigating the possibility of setting up a course to be run by their university.

### Summary

This paper has tried to show that the development of the Chinese Communist system influenced all aspects of the infrastructure, libraries no less than any other. The prevalent politics have always affected the way that libraries have evolved. When policies altered so attitudes to libraries altered.

By the same token, before 1976 it was difficult for Westerners to visit China freely. This has now changed and when members of HKLA made visits they were warmly welcomed and were not restricted in access to the libraries which they visited. They could film and video freely. The ISTIC workshops offered the possibility to many middle manager librarians from the region to know about library development in ISTIC. At those times advisors and lecturers from the West were also involved.

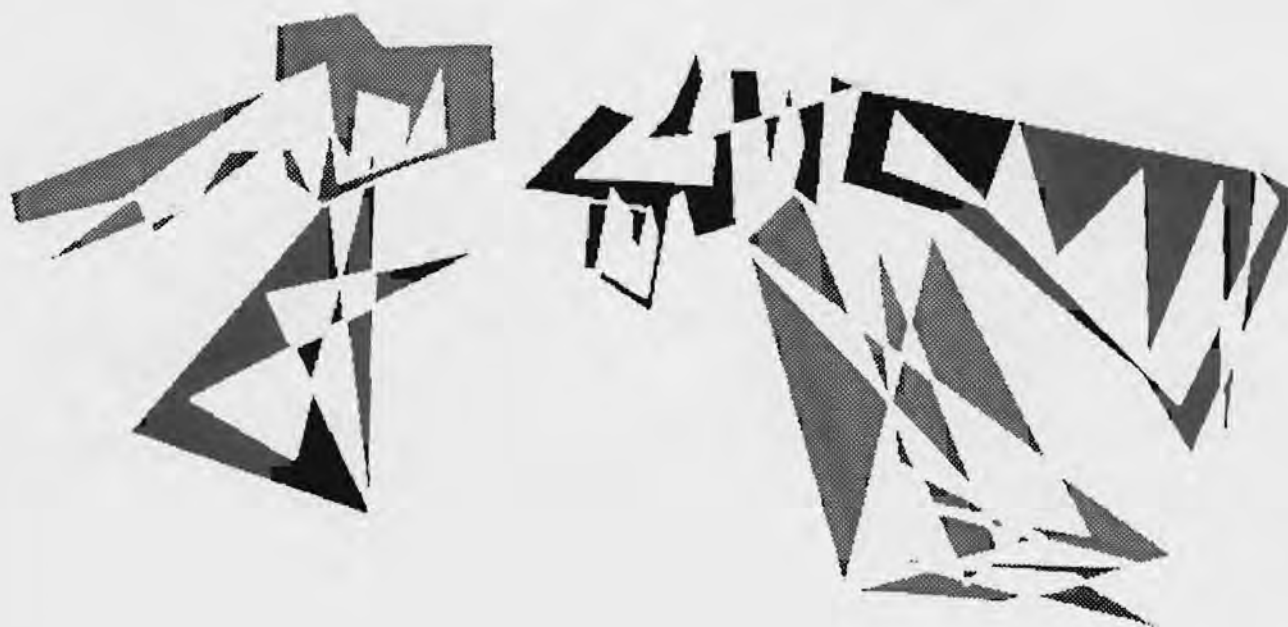
## **Kathleen Ladizesky**

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# Education and Literacy in Vietnam

## Background

Vietnam is slightly larger than Britain and has a population of 73 million in 53 Provinces. There are approximately 54 ethnic minorities accounting for 12 million of the population. In the 1850's Vietnam was invaded by France and became its colony. In 1940 Vietnam was invaded and occupied by Japan. This occupation was assisted by French collaborators. The underground movement (led by Ho Chi Minh) were armed and trained by the OSS, a forerunner of the CIA, and indeed made an honorary member.

In 1945 General Gracey, SEAC and British forces (mainly Indian), landed at Saigon to accept the Japanese surrender. When Ho Chi Minh declared Independence, Gracey used Japanese forces to uphold Martial Law. On the departure of British forces in 1946, French forces arrived to re-impose colonial rule. The War of Independence began, and ended with the defeat of the French at Dien Bien Phu.

In 1954 US "advisors" entered into South Vietnam, to prevent unification. Following the 1963 Gulf of Tonkin incident, US forces landed at Da Nang and a full scale war began. This ended with US defeat on 30th April 1975. Four times the total tonnage of bombs dropped in WW2 fell on Vietnam during the war, as well as 18 million gallons of Agent Orange. After the signing of the Paris agreement in 1973, the US won support for an international embargo of Vietnam. The US was the last country to lift this embargo in January 1994.

## International Relations

Exchange groups of students, teachers and scientists have taken place since 1951, to many countries, mainly from the then eastern block countries. For example, 20,000 undergraduates, 6,000 graduates and 3,500 post graduates were sent to the former Soviet Union. In addition, 20,000 vocational students, 800 vocational teachers and 5,500 vocational factory workers also studied in the USSR. Both Hanoi University and the Agricultural University received financial grants for equipment, etc.

UNICEF on average helps with US\$ 2 million per year on buildings, textbooks and teacher training. UNDP also has an important projects programme.

Vietnam sends 150-250 students for undergraduate and post graduate courses and English language training to Australia every year.



## The Education System

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), is the body responsible for managing and administering the education system which consists of day-care centres, kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, vocational schools, teacher training colleges, colleges and universities. A Government decree in November 1993 regulated the grades and levels as follows:

<u>Level</u>	<u>Duration</u>	<u>Entry Age</u>
Creche	3 years	3 to 4 years
Kindergarten	3 years	3 years
General Education	5 years	6 years
Primary	5 years	6 years
Lower secondary	4 years	11 years
Upper secondary	3 years	15 years
Vocational Education	1 year	13-14 years
After primary	1-2 years	15 years
After lower 2nd	3-4 years	15 years
2nd vocational	3-4 years	15 years
2nd Technical	3-4 years	15 years
Higher education		
short cycle	3 years	18 years
long cycle	4-6 years	18 years

Certificates are needed at various levels. This programme is not yet fully in place. Each of the provinces are at different stages of development.

The goal is for:

1. A universal good quality primary education by the year 2000
2. Decrease of illiteracy of workers aged 15-35 years
3. Open education including:
  - Part time courses
  - Evening institutes
  - Distance education and training

## Teachers For Vietnam

Since my first visit to Vietnam in 1988, I have been fortunate to travel to over 15 provinces, visiting some more than once and seeing schools, clinics and hospitals. I have seen a wide variety in quality of buildings, equipment, conditions and teaching materials. In my travels I have had requests for teachers.



In 1986 Vietnam introduced Doi Moi, and in the process a number of countries decided to ease their embargo. This opened up Vietnam to many countries and their companies and emphasised the need for English, the international language. The demand for English is great. The thirst by the Vietnamese to learn English is even greater.

Having enquired of the British Council and VSO (and been told that Vietnam is not on the agenda of either of these organisations, I began the Teachers for Vietnam project in co-operation with HEDO in 1993. (Editor's note: VSO opened a field office in Vietnam in 1994, sending people with a variety of skills including health workers and teachers).

In October 1993, the first five volunteers went out to work in Dong Nai, Nam Ha, Gia Lai and Tuyen Quang. We had some problems as it was all new to me and HEDO and new to the provincial authorities, but now approximately 16 volunteers have given a year to this project.

The people of the Highlands face particular challenges :

- \* High regions
- \* Inaccessible (it can take 3 or 4 days to reach villages)
- \* Lack of roads
- \* Children are a source of income and work with parents on the farm.
- \* Not attractive for teachers.

This is a quote from the Education Minister's statement : "At present authorities at all levels and branches have done almost nothing to encourage teachers, especially those in high, remote and disadvantaged regions with appropriate rewards".

Vietnam has not reached an average development level of compulsory elementary education. Moreover the widening gap in education between regions has led to inequality in education. Educational facilities and infrastructure are still poor and backward. Only 19% of primary schools have the minimum level of equipment, 27% of secondary schools and 26% of higher schools.

In the middle of the 1994-5 school year, there were about 10,000 three-shift classes in elementary education, and over 75,000 temporary classrooms made of bamboo. In Kindergarten there were about 20,000 temporary classrooms.

Boarding schools were introduced to encourage youngsters from the high regions to get an education. They stay at the school for four years and go home for holidays, but it could take up to four days to reach home.



These are the priorities for the Teachers for Vietnam project :

1. Teach the teachers
2. Teach the Local Government officials (as foreign companies come into the provinces they will be dealing with these authorities).
3. Teach the Russian-speaking Vietnamese
4. Teach the top students.

In Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, or any provincial town, it is the book shop and stationers that draws the crowd and does the business, from people of all ages. Books, novels and cassettes in English are to be seen on the shelves and are being bought.

Radio services such as the BBC World Service and Voice of America are listened to by many youngsters as they are a source of English speakers! Sometimes you come across a Vietnamese speaking with an American accent. Indeed when I visited Hanoi University, I thought it was an American University. One young man who had been listening to the BBC, wanted to discuss with me as to whether Scotland should have home rule!

With Vietnam now a member of ASEAN, the country is being brought into the family of nations, and it will, in a few years, become a major voice in that organisation. However, joining has brought more problems, one of which is English. English is the language of ASEAN and so it is essential that the Vietnamese become fluent in it. A project has begun to teach English to the government officials dealing with international affairs. This is a crash project over the next three years.

Several other English teaching projects, sponsored by among others the British Government, have also begun in the past two years which will no doubt be of use for Vietnam. A £50 million scheme has been arranged by the British Government with Vietnam for training the infrastructure of government. Vietnamese officials will come to Britain for training and courses will also take place in Vietnam. English will be part of that training. The more we meet with each other and speak to each other, the sooner we can begin to understand each other's country, culture and traditions. The English language, be it spoken or written, can be that bridge of friendship and understanding.

**Len Aldis**



## Back to the Past in South Africa ?

Dennis Davis is one of the leading intellectuals of South Africa, an academic lawyer, occasional journalist and facilitator of televised debates with an impeccable record of opposition to apartheid. Earlier this year, he criticised the appointment to the government's Human Rights Commission (HRC) of individuals with political backgrounds at variance with the concept of civil liberty. His statement was a well-motivated expression of opinion which would have passed unremarked in any robust democracy.

The reaction in the brave new South Africa was to brand him a racist, a trendy term of abuse hurled at any white who effectively challenges the new establishment. What made it worse was the fact that the first stone was cast by Barney Pityana, chairperson of the HRC. He was apparently incensed that Davis should have criticised a committee set up by Nelson Mandela and stoutly defended appointees with dubious backgrounds on the ground that they needed "educating".

This vicious attack was widely supported : a radio journalist went on the air to put the view that in any debate the opinion of a black man was automatically right. After his appalling experience, Davis condemned South Africa's "dreadful authoritarian culture which exists in popular politics....I no longer see any role for myself as a political commentator and critic". (1) The social democrat newspaper The Mail and Guardian, one of the outspoken defenders of freedom of expression in South Africa, pointed out that the new black elite saw articulate white left-wing intellectuals as their main critics: "The old conservatives," it continued in an editorial, "are, by and large, adapting to the new South Africa by accepting the hegemony of the new power-brokers like Pityana. They are playing the game, being as uncritical of authority and as sycophantic as always." (2) In its incisive analysis, The Mail went on to commend the Left for what it has traditionally done : "probe, criticise, argue and debate - a way of contributing to transformation which is very different to conservative acquiescence."

This has not been the only instance that suggests that freedom of expression is as fragile in the new South Africa as it was in the old. The left-wing intellectual, Pallo Jordan (whose experience interestingly includes abuse of his rights during a spell of detention by the ANC in exile),(3) was sacked from the Cabinet in April because he had been too outspoken in his opposition to privatisation and in his support for indigenous control of the South African media in the face of rapacious and imperialist transnational corporations. One of the ANC's allies is the media magnate Tony O'Reilly who now owns a large share of the South African English Language press. The ANC's reaction to criticism from the independent press has often been threatening. Apparently unable to respond by justifying its actions and policies in a mature way, it stoops to the cowardly tactic of accusing the press of "insulting" the President.



Much of the rhetoric about democracy and its attendant freedoms in South Africa is actually about a shift of power from one elite to another. It is true that South Africans now have constitutionally entrenched rights and the prospect of new legislation on censorship and freedom of information. But all this counts for little when the politically powerful can muster no higher a level of discourse than puerile spurious criticism about racism and *l'ese majest'e*. This should come as no surprise to those who know the background of the new rainbow elite : African traditionalists heavily steeped in patriarchy, returnees from the paranoid world of exile, plus the odd Stalinist. Under apartheid, dissenters braved the retribution of the police state ; now they face the marginalising misrepresentation by the new hegemonists strong and confident in the knowledge of uncritical international support.

Indeed, the foreign press is a major part of the politically correct myth making about South Africa. For the ordinary citizen the country is increasingly violence-ridden, inefficient and corrupt, run by a nomenklatura paid outrageous salaries and indentifiable by their smart cars and cell phones ( par of the "package"). But perhaps the greatest piece of misinformation about South Africa is the frequently touted opinion that transition has been a "peaceful miracle". A civil war has raged in KwaZulu-Natal all decade leaving a trail of thousands of corpses across the province. But no-one takes much notice because nearly all the victims are black. Now that's real racism for you.

## **Christopher Merrett**

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### Librarians at Liberty on ISC

This new magazine draws together critical thought about libraries and information science from many countries and many points of view in a pleasing, large format. The first article reprints one which opened *Librarians at Liberty* two years ago : Jason McQuinn's "Organizing an Alternative Press Display for Local Libraries," symbolizing the close relationship between our two publications. Highly recommended for all public and academic libraries.



## A Riot to Read

HOGG, Ron & LADIZESKY, Kathleen : Directory of Libraries and Book Agents In the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, The British Library Document Supply Centre, Boston Spa, 1994 ; ISBN 0 7123 2110 1 ; ISSN 1355 2163 ; pp.136

There are times when one comes upon a reference work and thinks - great, tis looks to be a very useful reference tool. Yet upon an examination of the work it's a case of - not so good after all. This is such a work.

Before I give an explanation as to why I am not impressed by the work, I should give an outline of the directory's contents : Forward ; Maps ; Country Index ; Address directory by country ; Cyrillic titles ; Cover-to-cover translation of Cyrillic titles ; Slavonic titles ; Organisation Index ; Town Index.

So, why am I not impressed ? Well, I should start with the two A4 size maps which are dated 9/92. This means that the maps are already out of date with regards to Ex-Yugoslavia. ( But that is not the compilers fault ).

The Country Index is very thorough, and I can not fault the bibliographical information - as far as it goes! My main complaint is about what has been included (or rather - left out), and the way in which the directory has been thrown together.

The Address Directory is not consistent in either content or style. For some entries there are telephone, fax, and E Mail numbers. For others there is not even a phone number. The addresses have been laid out as they would be written in the country concerned, i.e. town before street, etc. All well and good, but it does presume a knowledge of international country codes and how addresses can vary, (something that is not widely understood) while no note of explanation about such things is to be found within the forward to the work. But the really awful thing about the listings within each country, is that they are NOT in any alphabetical order.

While most of the entries are for Eastern European government and academic bodies, there are also some other interesting inclusions. Many of the entries are for British Council establishments. e.g. three in the Slovak Republic. There are also lists of book agents in France, Germany, the USA and Britain. None of the bodies in the country by country directory are in alphabetical order.

**Martyn Lowe**



## Fellow Travellers

The Commonweal Collection, c/o J.B. Priestley Library, University of Bradford, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD7 1DP, Telephone 01274 383404

The Commonweal Collection is a selection of books and journals on nonviolence and social change. The Collection was founded in 1959 and run by David Hoggett. During 1963 a trust was established to look after the collection, and it was moved up to the University of Bradford in 1979, after the death of David Hoggett. The collection covers all aspects of Peace and the study of Nonviolence, so it was very appropriate for the move it take place, as the University has a department of Peace studies.

Housmans Peace Directory, 5 Caledonian Road, London, N1, Telephone 0171 278 4474

The Directory lists circa 2,000 peace and human rights organisations worldwide. The directory is updated and modified (Eg phone/postal codes) on a constant basis, while organisations are added or deleted : a task that is a major example of International co-operation, with both organisations and individuals sending updates in. It is thus the definitive directory in its field. The directory is also available on line and contains details on local branches of national campaigning bodies, very local groups etc. The Housmans Bookshop contains a wide range of books and periodicals including the famous Housmans Peace Diary.

Human Rights Watch (HRA), 485 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10017-6104, U.S.A.

HRA are an organisation that is concerned with the global state of human ights. The HRW publication catalog contains works that cover the world. Here is a sample of their titles : The Human Rights Crisis in Kashmir ; Divide And Rule - State sponsored Ethnic Violence in Kenya ; Arming Rwanda ; Human Rights in Tajikistan in the Wake of the Civil War. HRA publications also cover such places as Albania, Bolivia, Cameroon, Estonia, Greece, Guyana, India, Hong Kong, Japan, UK, USA, former USSR, Uzbekistan, Zaire, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. The HRW Quarterly Newsletter is also worth reading.

International Institute of Social History, Cruquiusweg 31, 1019 AT Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Although Librarians Within the Peace Movement (LWPM) together with its journal AIR ( Alternative Information Record) no longer exist, their archives live on and have recently been handed over to the IISH in Amsterdam. LWPM was founded at the end of 1989 and folded in April 1993. AIR reached 10 editions between the period March 1990 and September 1992.

The archives are being catalogued and preserved at the IISH ]. The Institute has ideal conservation conditions and contains a collection of archives that are related to the concerns of LWPM.

The IISH, a first class research establishment, is housed in a newly converted warehouse, with the archives held in carefully controlled (temperature, humidity, and lighting) conditions. Amongst the holdings of the IISH are the archives of Sylvia Pankhurst, Gustav Landauer, Rosa Luxemburg, Emma Goldman, Michail Bakunin, Raymond Postgate, Dora Russell, William Morris, and Harold Laski. The IISH also holds the archives of the War Resisters International, plus those of many other organisations. In fact there are over 1.500 archives that are held by the Institute.

The Latin America Bureau (LAB), 1 Amwell Street, London, E.C.1.

The LAB periodical Latin America Outlook lists a number of LAB publications. These include the LAB Resource guides ; Rainforest Resources Guide ; Caribbean Resources Guide ; and The Andes - Action and Resources Guide. LAB also publishes the following : Columbia - His Enterprise ; Honduras - State for Sale ; The Great Tin Crash - Bolivia and the World Tin Market ; and Panama - Made in the USA.

NOD & Conversion, Centre for Peace and Conflict Research, Copenhagen, Fredericia Gade 18, 1310 Copenhagen K, Denmark.

This International Research Newsletter, is the successor to NOD (Non Offensive Defence) and is produced by the Centre for Peace and Conflict Research, Copenhagen. As the title suggests, this learned periodical covers all aspects of research into armaments and disarmament, current political changes etc. The Periodical also reviews a very wide range of new books, working-papers, periodicals, and articles, and is thus a very important bibliographical tool in its own right.

Pogrom, Postfach 2024, 37010 Gottingen, Germany

This German language periodical's subtitle (a journal for threatened people), is a good description of what it is about. For example, the magazine has covered affairs in Ex-Yugoslavia, Tibet, Peru, and Canada within just one issue.

Zoom is not Zam

The Austrian anti-militarist periodical Zam has recently had a change of name, and has been retitled Zoom. We just thought you might like to know.

**Martyn Lowe**



# A Short History of The Commonweal Collection

## Introduction

The Commonweal Collection contains a vision of how the world could be, and of how to create that world. People power or non-violent resistance is a means of struggle for social change, a power that can change the world. The Collection is a resource for those people who want to build this new society; it shows them what is wrong with the present situation, what the alternatives are and how they may be achieved.

The library grew out of the Collection of David Hoggett, a man with the vision and foresight to see the need for a comprehensive unit of easily accessible material for workers in the peace movement which was flourishing to counteract the dangerous Cold War climate of the 1960's and 1970's.

## David Hoggett -The Founder

David was born in Bristol in 1929, and inherited his parents' musical talents ; his father was an orchestral viola player, and his mother a piano teacher. On leaving school he worked in Cheltenham Public Library, where he learnt general library organisation, classifying and indexing and deepened his appreciation of books. Through ardent reading he gradually became interested in pacifism and non-violence as a way of life. This was fostered by three years in India as a worker for the International Voluntary Service for Peace, where he was involved in the Bhoodan 'land-gift' movement based on Gandhian ideals of working for the benefit and welfare of all the community, and sharing the proceeds and skills.

On his return to England in 1955 he became apprenticed to a carpenter and became accomplished at his trade. Whilst using this skill during his holidays, building homes for refugees in Austria under the auspices of the United Nations Association, he fell from a roof, which left him paralysed. This unfortunate accident completely changed his physical life, the outcome of this contributed to the creation of Commonweal. After extensive treatment in Austria, and later, in Lodge Moor hospital, Sheffield, he returned home to Cheltenham (in 1958), where he was cared for by his mother, Theo, and brother, Chris, and later by Alfred, another IVSP worker, who became his nurse and friend, and the general factotum for the library.

Although confined to bed, David could use his right elbow to control ingenious devices designed by his brother, and attached to the bed or ceiling enabled the use of light, radio, TV and telephone. Later, a Welsh miner donated a Patient Operated Selector Mechanism typewriter (his POSSUM) which he could operate by blowing through a tube, and eventually by a small rod attached to the back of his hand. This made him less reliant on friends and family for literary needs, though he welcomed them for other reasons e.g. playing chess.



Propped up in bed with pillows, he read avidly, and his knowledge was prodigious. Chris added more floor-to-ceiling shelves in David's room to hold the numerous books and periodicals sent to him by kind friends. These books formed the nucleus of the future Commonweal Library.

His experiences, his reading and the inspiration from visitors' conversation, led David to plan to establish a Community house based on Gandhian/Quaker ideas of peace, non-violence and the development of an inner spirituality to enable a better way of living. In 1959, Alfred and David, his ripple bed, communication aids and his collection of books moved to Merthyr Tydfil in Wales to set up such a community. It flourished at first and earned a reputation for its caring work with underprivileged people in the area, but after two years it disbanded as many of its members had moved on to other things.

David then moved into a friend's cottage in Merthyr, and Alfred lived nearby, and there they stayed for three years, during which time the size of his friends' family grew, and the number of books increased, so that the cottage became overfull, causing David to move back to Cheltenham.

#### Commonweal - The Early Years

The five years in Wales (1959-1964) were important years for the Collection. Serving a group of pacifists and people whose primary ideals were centred on peace, non-violence and alternative living, the ethos of the library began to shift more towards these areas and set the pattern for the future, pivotted around Gandhian ideals of a better life.

Members of peace and non-violent direct action groups outside of Wales were eager to learn more and as a result the idea of a postal library evolved. David began to classify and catalogue the books. Bibliographies and Indexes of books and articles in publications were made and sent to enquirers. Loans were free of charge, usually for two months, with the borrower paying return postage. The key subjects were, and still are, writings by and about Gandhi, life and stories of influential peace makers, and information about alternative life styles.

Thus the ethos and the organisation of the library were in place. David appealed to friends and publishers for donations of books or periodicals, laying the foundation for this practice throughout the life of the library to the present day.

In 1963, while David was living in the cottage at Merthyr, he decided to put the library into trust so that it would continue when he was no longer able to run it. The four Trustees were himself, his cousin April Carter (active in the Committee of 100), and two friends Donald Groom and Devi Presad, who were also active in the Peace Movement. The Trust Deed named the library officially as the Commonweal Collection.



On returning to Cheltenham, David concentrated his efforts on the Collection as his contribution towards peace and reconciliation. It became his life and he worked hard at it, using his organising skills to the full to establish and run an efficient postal library, with the help of friends, family, and particularly Alfred, who also looked after his medical needs.

Over several years David laboriously designed a unique classification system, using letters instead of numbers, which he felt was more flexible for expansion and better suited to a specialist library. By 1972, 3,000 books and runs of 60 periodicals ranged round his room and into his mother's music room, all indexed and up to date.

There was seldom anything out of place, and David could always tell exactly where everything was to be found, directing users straight to the appropriate shelf. This included meticulous notes, correspondence, diaries, translations and criticisms which he had written. He compiled indexes of extracts and cross references to whole areas of the library e.g. Gandhi's collected works and specialist bibliographies on 'themes', which listed all possible useful books to cover each topic, with a short synopsis of each book.

These were invaluable for use at conferences, for local borrowers, students and academics from all over the world, and were sold by publishers and booksellers. Continuous rolls of typing paper and sticky labels allowed David to execute library business for some time unattended.

Over the years the library became known and more used, although it was always financially precarious, dependent on donations of books and money. Constant increases in postal costs meant that from 1973, users had to pay the costs of borrowing as well as returning books, unless they were on low income.

Users of the library were grateful for all the help and friendship given by letter or in person by David and his team of helpers, and valued the hard work which was involved in compiling the indexes and bibliographies. Friends and visitors were amazed at his courage and humour, and his commitment to the ideals in which he believed, a peaceful world, non-violence and an end to the threat of nuclear weapons.

David achieved a great deal, despite his physical limitations, and he had numerous friends and family willing to help him. He appeared to have an inner strength and love of humanity which gave a purpose to his life and kept him a cheerful, uncomplaining individual right up to his death on November 15th 1975, from a virulent urine infection.

He is still remembered with affection by many people who feel their lives enriched for having known him, and also he is remembered for the energy and commitment he gave to establish a wonderful legacy, the Commonweal Collection.



### Commonweal in Bradford

His death left the Trustees with the question of the disposal of such a unique collection. They felt it was essential to keep the library intact as a single unit with its specialist ethos preserved.

After much discussion they decided to move the library to Bradford University, where the first School of Peace Studies in the United Kingdom had recently been established. New courses in Peace Studies with a peace library on its doorstep seemed a very sensible arrangement, and there was a host of voluntary helpers and regular users in the University and in the local community.

The University staff were very welcoming and pleased to have this unique Collection housed on campus. They pledged to house the Collection in a separate room in the main University library, to allow it to keep its legal independence, its identity and autonomy, and to do all they could to ensure its safety and well-being, an arrangement which continues today.

Settling the library into an existing and different institution took several months, requiring much patience and meeting time to formulate a viable and good working relationship.

A first essential was for the trustees to inform past users of the new address and ensure them that their friendly library was not to be lost to them, and that, although it was unlikely to continue as a postal library, books could be borrowed through the inter-library loans service.

The main problems from the changeover were finding a room to house the Collection, integrating it into the Bradford issuing system and finding somebody to run the library, and the means to pay them. The brunt of solving these problems fell to the chief librarians, Frank Earnshaw and John Horton, and to Trustee Nigel Young, then lecturing in the School of Peace Studies.

These were not insurmountable problems and solutions were found. Nigel persuaded a young friend, Bob Overy, to co-ordinate the library changeover part-time while doing doctoral research on Gandhi in the Peace Studies department. He was assisted by Mark Dunn, one of David's young helpers in Cheltenham, now employed for six months by means of a Quaker Peace Studies Trust grant. He was to stay on for some time as a volunteer.

A small room was allotted on the second floor of the University library and Bob painstakingly negotiated shelving and other library needs and he and Mark sorted and labelled the books with distinguishing Commonweal Collection labels, aided by J.B. Priestley library staff. They were helped later by willing volunteers, mostly of Peace Studies students whom Bob organised into workgroups responsible for certain sections of the Collection.



This is fully in keeping with the original decentralist philosophy of Commonweal, that people should take a hand in decision making and the destiny of the community in which they function.

Each group kept their section in order, recommended improvements in method and made suggestions for purchasing books or periodicals. Other ideas were brought for discussion to the monthly workgroup meeting. This allowed Bob to establish an acquisitions policy and discover publicity needs. These workgroups are still an active facet of the Commonweal structure and the monthly meetings are full of plans for publicity, work to be done, or taking Commonweal to the wider community.

The changeover from Cheltenham to Bradford owes its smoothness to the hard work and willingness of the J.B. Priestley library staff, to Nigel Young, trustee, to Mark Dunn and Bob Overy, first co-ordinator who bravely drew order out of chaos, steered and set the pattern of organisation for Commonweal in Bradford. Also the work of Alfred, who packed the books in Cheltenham and chased up any that were overdue.

Commonweal has thrived since its move to Bradford, thanks to the dedicated work of trustees, co-ordinators and volunteers, although it frequently has struggled to survive because of financial constraints.

A stream of co-ordinators has followed Bob, who officially left in the summer of 1978, although he helped for a lot longer after this. All of these people have added their strengths and ideas to the Collection, but their contribution was limited by the hours worked which depended on the availability of funding from Trusts and donations.

After Bob, the Trustees were able to offer part-time employment to Peter Todd, a trained librarian and post-graduate student. This post was made possible from the donated proceeds of a Joan Baez concert held in December 1977. He was helped by co-ordinator, Brenda Thomson, one of the first post-graduates in Peace Studies, whose remit was to generally promote the Collection, keep in good contact with students, and organise the workgroups.

They advanced the position of Commonweal and the quality of service a great deal in the two years in which they worked in harness. In the summer of 1979, they were both due to leave, and the future of Commonweal was in the balance again.

Nigel Young wrote to 50 trusts for grants to fund a Fellowship, and subsequently accrued sufficient grants to employ Bill Jones as co-ordinator part-time and to do research based on 'The literature of the Collection'.

Once the Fellowship ended, Commonweal had mostly exhausted the goodwill of Trusts, and for five months relied on volunteers, as there were no funds to pay a co-ordinator.